

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

1. MEAT EATING BY LION-TAILED MACAQUE, *MACACA SILENUS* (ZIMMERMANN)

For the past one year we have been conducting studies on the impact of habitat fragmentation on small mammals in the wet evergreen or rainforests in the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary (previously Anamalai Wildlife Sanctuary) in Tamil Nadu. The study funded by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India, focuses on arboreal mammals, terrestrial rodents and small carnivores.

On 27th December 1994 we were busy doing group scan of our study troop of Lion-tailed macaque (LTM) in a rain forest fragment at Varattuparai in the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary near Valparai. At 1545 hrs we heard the alarm calls of a giant squirrel about 75 m to our right. We found that the calls came from a *Mesua ferrea* tree where an adult male LTM was actively taking apart a giant squirrel nest, while two squirrels were giving alarm calls in order to keep the monkey away. The male LTM picked out a young giant squirrel (probably a sub-adult) by its throat. Soon the LTM leapt to a *Cullenia excelsa* tree with the squirrel in its mouth and sat in the top peripheral canopy. The other monkeys of the group were feeding on *Cullenia* fruits on the same tree. The male started eating the giant squirrel, peeling its skin from the head. It finished eating the

squirrel in 30 minutes, leaving only the claws, paws, skull and skin. The skin measured 60 cm from head to tail, with a tail of 35 cm. While feeding on its prey, the male never allowed any other individuals to come near. Feeding on mammalian prey has been reported in baboons and chimpanzees. In the LTM, feeding on giant squirrel infants has been reported before in the Anamalais (Kumar 1987). What makes this observation striking is the size of the prey, which was a sub-adult or juvenile. In addition to this we have also observed LTM feeding on flying squirrels in Puthutotum estate near Valparai. Studies in undisturbed forests have shown that LTM gets protein mostly from animal matter, especially foliage insects, and rarely mammalian prey. It is likely that predation on mammalian prey might increase in highly degraded forests such as privately held estates and forest fragments, because the availability of foliage insects might be considerably less compared to undisturbed forests.

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REFERENCE

KUMAR, A. (1987): The ecology and population dynamics of the Lion-tailed macaque (*Macaca silenus*) in

South India. *Ph.D. Dissertation*, University of Cambridge.

2. PANTHER, *PANTHERA PARDUS* (LINNAEUS) WITH GUINEA WORM INFECTION

About 30 Km from Udaipur there is a place called Dholi Ghati situated in a valley. In the early fifties this area was inaccessible by road and sparsely populated. Near Dholi Ghati there were three villages Jogion-Ka-Guda, Sahawaton-Ka-Guda and Majam. The whole area teemed with game and was a favourite hunting ground of my father.

In those days the chief ailment of the people

of this region was, Guinea Worms, Dysentery and Malaria. My father during his jungle excursions always carried a first aid kit to treat the people suffering from these ailments. To treat Guinea Worm patients he used a simple method. When a Guinea Worm protruded partly from a blister he would inject a minute quantity of Tincture Iodine into the Worm with a very fine hypodermic needle and would tie

the worm. Within 24 hours the iodine would kill the worm thereby loosening its grip on the muscles of the patient. Later it can be wound on a stick slowly and extracted from the patient.

My father the late Shri T.H. Tehsin's diary shows that during the winter of, 1948 he had treated 900 patients suffering from Guinea Worm at Dholi Ghati during his stay of 2 months. One of the patient's had 80 Guinea Worms in his body. One even protruded from his tongue. He expired within a fortnight. This proves the gravity of the suffering of the people from this disease in those days.

While looking through the diaries I came across an interesting note. On 6th February 1952 my father shot a leopard in Kachot, a place near Dholi Ghati, in a beat. The animal was very lean. While skinning, he found some yellowish fluid oozing out from a small wound, just above the right eye of the animal. He cut the flesh near the wound and extracted a thin, long, white worm, which he noted was a Guinea Worm. Leopards too apparently suffered from Guinea Worm infection.

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3. SOME NOTES ON HIMALAYAN PALM CIVET, *PAGUMA LARVATA* (HAMILTON-SMITH) (CARNIVORA: VIVERRIDAE)

The Himalayan Palm Civet *Paguma larvata* is a tree civet found in the outer and greater Himalaya. Between 1989 and 1992 three dead specimens of the species were found by me in the university campus at Nauni and around Solan (30° 52' North latitude and 77° 11' East longitude) in Himachal Pradesh, at an altitude of 1300 m and 1500 m respectively. The forests around Solan are represented by subtropical pine forests. (Champion and Seth 1968). The dominant tree species is Chir Pine (*Pinus roxburghii*) followed by Ban Oak (*Quercus incana*) at higher altitudes. Shrubs are represented by *Rosa* sp., *Viburnum* sp. and *Debregeasia* sp. Two of the dead civets bore bullet marks on their body. The third one appeared to be a case of natural death. The present communication is based on the reports dealing with these dead specimens, interrogation reports of farmers in the study area and on observations made on a captive specimen.

According to Roberts (1977), this species is largely frugivorous and there are many instances of their raiding apricot, pear and apple trees when the fruit is ripening. A specimen of this species which was shot by a farmer at midnight in May 1989 near Solan was recovered by me.

The animal had been visiting a Loquat tree (*Eriobotrya japonica*) near the farmer's house for

a week doing a lot of damage to ripening fruits. The faeces of the animal with Loquat seeds were also recovered by me close to the Loquat tree. Subsequently I visited several orchards mostly of stone fruits like peach (*Prunus persica*), plum (*Prunus domestica*), apricot (*Prunus armeniaca*) and vegetable fields around Solan and in the campus of Dr Y.S. Parmar University at Nauni. Almost all the farmers when questioned about this civet said that the animal is a serious pest of stone fruits like peach, plum, apricot and vegetables like peas and tomato. The farmers admitted that they do not hesitate to kill it. The civet is locally called 'Ooj' since it damages their orchards and vegetable crops. Their views were confirmed by the analysis of gut contents of another specimen which was shot and killed by someone near the university campus in May 1991. The analysis revealed that the animal had consumed green peas and apricots which are grown in plenty in the university campus and its surrounding areas. In December 1992, civets are reported to have dug up the seeds of apricot and peach stored in a pit for stratification in the university campus at Nauni. The endocarp of the seeds were removed by the animals before consuming the kernels.

Another civet was found dead by me near the Boy's Hostel of the University in 1992. The animal